AN INVESTIGATION OF THE VISUAL POTENTIALS OF

COMBINING PLASTIC MATERIALS WITH PAPER OR FABRIC OR BOTH

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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE VISUAL POTENTIALS OF COMBINING PLASTIC MATERIALS WITH PAPER OR FABRIC OR BOTH

PROBLEM IN LIEU OF THESIS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Materials and process have been major concerns in my work for some time. No preconceived idea is arrived at prior to the making of a piece, but the combination of materials and process determine the imagery. The subject matter of my work is myself, but the personal as well as visual meaning usually occurs during the process. Processes traditionally thought of as women's activities, i.e., sewing, ironing, dyeing, scrubbing, etc., are most often employed; and they aid in expressing my experiences as a woman.

Some time ago I became concerned with using paper as a medium or mode of expression rather than just a background on which something is placed. I soaked, folded, formed, dyed, printed, tore, crushed, and sewed machine-made, as well as handmade and mould-made, papers. After this idea had been well explored, I began adding fabric to these formed and folded paper pieces. I believe that the addition of fabric gave my work a softness and feminine quality which was, and still is, important to me.

Recently I wished to explore a new material which would add a less subtle and more transparent quality to my work than did paper and fabric. I began to experiment with

combining plastic materials such as clear vinyl, cellophane, liquid plastic, silicone, and metallic window film as a mode of expression. The plastic materials were folded, sewn, torn, tinted, ironed, poured, and shaped until imagery with visual and personal meaning occurred. The idea of using plastic materials within or in combination with transparent wrappings of plastic has been a fairly consistent theme in this work. The utilization of the plastic materials alone or with paper and fabric has developed into an area with many possibilities for future investigation.

In this creative project, I chose to explore the visual potentials of combining plastic materials with paper or fabric or both in such a way as to produce both visually strong and personally meaningful works. To clarify this investigation, the following questions were formulated to be answered by the completion of a series of ten pieces.

1. What techniques are utilized in altering the opaque and transparent materials?
2. What mechanical devices, chemical devices, or physical properties are utilized in joining the different materials?
3. Are the combinations of any two of the materials preferable to combining all three?
4. What media are most useful for tinting and coloring the materials?

5. What problems are encountered in presentation of the transparent and opaque pieces?

During the completion of the ten pieces, a written journal was kept in order to maintain a record of the progress and outcome of this investigation. In addition, data was illustrated by photographic slides. One piece was photographed at various stages of development, and all of the pieces were photographed at completion. The following analysis of the finished work was made from this information.

CHAPTER II

STUDIO INVESTIGATION

Throughout the development of this creative project, the same general approach to studio production was used; but the processes that were utilized varied with each piece. Consistently, the works were initiated with no preconceived idea; and the meaning and imagery emerged during the process of combining materials. Sometimes more than one piece was worked on at a time. I would at times feel a need to cease working on a piece for a while, and it would be hung on my studio wall uncompleted while I began to arrange materials for the next piece. Ideas would often begin with discarded pieces of previous works accumulated in my studio or with remnants and materials that I would come across. In a few of the works, the pieces would have been developed for some time, only to be cut apart with only a small portion of the original arrangement retained for the finished piece. In the completion of the pieces, many of the processes utilized continued to be those associated with "women's activities"--the stimulus for much of my earlier work.

Figure #1: "Wet Eclipse"
Size: 12" x 29"

The techniques which were utilized in altering the materials were pouring, ironing, and forming. These same techniques were the devices also used to join the materials in this piece. Liquid plastic (Varathane was the brand of liquid plastic that I found to be most successful.) was poured over and under an arrangement of paper, fabric, and plastic sheeting, thus connecting them as it hardened. The character of each material was changed by absorption of some of the liquid plastic or by being covered with it. The liquid plastic not only created a shiny or slightly wet-look surface, but also hardened the materials somewhat. An electric iron was used to laminate materials between a partial wrapping of clear vinyl. The heat melted the vinyl together joining the materials. The liquid plastic was altered by allowing a semi-hardened layer of plastic to form on top of the liquid. After this, the layer was skimmed off and placed into an arrangement of paper, plastic, and fabric materials. This formed layer of plastic also acted to join some materials as they were embedded in it.

Using all three materials--paper, fabric, and plastic--seemed to work well in this piece. The fabric used was pelon, an unwoven and quite absorbent fabric which produced qualities that allowed pelon to relate to the other two materials.

Fabric dye was sponged onto the surface to tint both the paper and the fabric. The paper used in this piece was taken from one of my old collagraph prints; and, consequently, the print paper was colored by oil based printing ink before being dyed.

The major problem encountered in completing this piece was presentation. The work exists in five rectangular sections, thus creating a need for some system that would connect the five sections. I felt that this system would have to be as minimal as possible so as not to draw the eye away from the things happening within each section and their relationship to each other. The solution was to sandwich the sections between two pieces of one-eighth inch plexiglass. A one-eighth inch cube of plexiglass was glued between the two larger pieces at each edge in order to hold them together. Holes were drilled in the back piece of plexiglass behind two of the sections so that wire could be looped through as a hanging device.

Figure #2: "Packaged Sentiments #5"
Size: 13" x 10"

Wrinkling, folding, pouring, brushing, dripping, ironing, and cutting were all techniques used to alter materials in this piece. Metallic window film was wrinkled and folded as materials were arranged on top of it. Pelon fabric was folded creating softer edges than cutting and adding a

three-dimensional surface to the arrangement. An electric iron was used to fray the metallic window film and some of the clear plastic sheeting by heating it. At one stage, this piece was wrapped in cellophane after which a razor knife was used to cut away sections of it. This altered the effect created by the cellophane wrapping by removing some of the overall shininess of the surface. Liquid plastic was poured, brushed, or dripped onto the materials being arranged, changing their surfaces and becoming a material used to join the surfaces. Other devices used to join were adhering materials to the sticky side of metallic window film and joining by machine sewing. All three types of materials combined well here using waxed paper, pelon fabric, and several plastic materials including metallic window film, cellophane, and liquid plastic.

Among the media used to tint or color the liquid plastic were dry pigment, oil paint, and silver bronze powder. The dry pigment and bronze powder were mixed in small amounts with the liquid plastic and only tinted the material leaving it fairly transparent. The oil paint mixed with liquid plastic caused it to be come opaque. The other fabric, paper, and plastic materials in this piece were tinted or colored with one of the mixtures of liquid plastic.

The work was hung on the wall for presentation with only one addition. A piece of quarter inch foam-core board was

sewn to the back of the work to strengthen it and hold it slightly away from the wall. A device was made for attaching the piece to the wall by sewing a one inch by three inch strip of velcro attachment to the core board backing and tacking the joining strip to the wall. Lighting was somewhat of a problem in the presentation of this piece because of the reflective quality of the plastic materials. However, I do not view this as any more of a problem than hanging a piece covered with glass or plexiglass. Also, some of the shininess and distractions created by the reflective materials were intended as part of the image.

In view of the fact that the remaining pieces were accomplished by similar techniques and to avoid being redundant, I will not describe processes previously discussed. Most of the techniques utilized for altering, the devices used for joining, and the media used for coloring or tinting materials are the same as those processes used before. In the remaining descriptions, I will only discuss processes that are new and add to the content of this investigation. I will concentrate on techniques that make the work being described unique in comparison to preceding works.

Figure #3: "Packaged Sentiments #6"
Size: 13" x 10"

In addition to techniques previously used, the combination of tearing, folding, and gathering were used to alter the manufactured appearance of paper in this piece. Each of these techniques created a different type of line or edge and the folding or gathering added various degrees of relief as well as shape to the work.

Plastic cement and clear plastic tape were used to join some of the plastic materials. The plastic cement was used for holding materials together temporarily, for instance, until they could be sewn together. However, I do not feel that the plastic cement produced a strong enough bond alone. Clear plastic tape joined pieces of the arrangement well and worked into the total piece nicely since it was quite compatible with the materials being joined.

The basic kinds of materials combined in this piece were limited to paper and plastic; all fabrics were omitted. Included were metallic window film, liquid plastic, a piece of textured plastic dropcloth, rag paper, and rice paper. There were no really noticeable advantages at this point to combining only two of the three types of materials being investigated.

Liquid graphite was used for the first time to tint the liquid plastic. The liquid graphite mixed well with the

liquid plastic and was also squirted on top of poured liquid plastic while the plastic was still wet giving a smoked effect to the surface.

Figure #4: "Packaged Sentiments #7"
Size: 13" x 10"

The materials were again limited to only two of the three types of materials being investigated. This time plastic and fabric materials were combined, while paper was omitted. Materials included nylon, fabric lint, metallic window film, liquid plastic, and cellophane.

Cutting with scissors, ripping by hand, and dipping in liquid plastic were all techniques used to alter the nylon fabric used in this piece. The nylon fabric was retrieved from a stack of old lingerie while I was in the process of making rags by partly cutting the material apart with scissors and partly ripping it away. This process of cutting and ripping the fabric produced choppy cut edges and softer, slightly pulled edges in the nylon adding contrasts in the imagery being developed. The pieces of nylon were then partially dipped in clear liquid plastic before being placed into the arrangement of fabric lint and plastic materials being combined. This partial dipping left parts of the nylon fabric very soft and partly solidified as the liquid plastic dried, therefore giving the nylon the quality of permanently remaining formed in the way in which it was arranged in the piece.

The metallic window film and fabric lint, taken from the filter of an electric clothes dryer, were both altered as well as joined by laying the fabric lint onto the sticky side of the window film and then pulling it off. The sticky surface of the window film retained some of the lint, creating a somewhat fuzzy surface with larger clumps of lint in some places.

Ironing with an electric iron was once again used, but this time to alter the clear cellophane covering this work. Wax paper was laid on top of the cellophane before ironing, making it easier to control the amount of change occuring while heating the material. The heat from the iron wrinkled and slightly fogged the cellophane covering making it more difficult to view the materials under the cellophane covering in the areas which had been ironed. Also, the ironed areas of the cellophane were naturally less reflective, creating a needed change in the surface of the covering of this work.

Oil pastels and palegold bronze powder were media used to tint liquid plastic in this piece. Breaking up the oil pastels and dropping them into the liquid plastic did not work very well because the breaking apart and mixing of the pigments with the liquid plastic was quite slow. After this, I tried breaking down the oil pastels with turpentine first and then mixing them with the liquid plastic. This idea

worked better but was still a very slow process. Although this mixture was successful enough to be used here, I was never able to achieve a really smooth blending using the oil pastel to tint the liquid plastic. However, a smooth blend is not always desired, and this mixture would work well in such cases. A small amount of the palegold bronze powder was added to the mixture which blended well, giving a luminous effect to the already tinted liquid plastic.

Figure #5: "Packaged Sentiments #8"
Size: 13" x 10"

Materials combined in this piece included metallic window film, clear cellophane, liquid plastic, and canvas, limiting myself again to only plastic and fabric. The canvas seemed to work fairly well with the plastic materials in this work. The canvas absorbed the liquid plastic easily and created a coarser surface in contrast to the slick plastic surfaces being used.

Soft pastel was the medium used to tint the liquid plastic in this piece. The pastels were first crushed and ground into a fine powder by laying the pastels between waxed paper and then beating and rolling it with a rolling pin. The fine colored powder was then stirred into the liquid plastic. This method and media seemed to be the most successful one used for coloring the liquid plastic so far. The crushed pastel mixed with the liquid plastic

very evenly and smoothly. Discovering that soft pastels would color liquid plastic successfully was an important find in this investigation because this knowledge opened up a much wider range of colors or tints available for use with the liquid plastic.

Liquid graphite was used again, only this time to color the cellophane covering the work. The liquid graphite was squirted on the cellophane and then rubbed off in some areas. Liquid plastic in a spray can was then sprayed over the graphite to hold it permanently in place. While the liquid graphite on the cellophane was still wet from being sprayed with liquid plastic, some of the graphite was scraped off by scribbling across the graphite-covered cellophane with a blunt knife, creating a linear effect and a partial transparent linear opening through which the imagery under the cellophane covering could be viewed.

Although the last five pieces produced for this investigation are arranged verbally in sequence for the purpose of describing them as individual works, they were actually worked on simultaneously. Figures #6 and #7 remained two-dimensional, while Figures #8, #9, and #10 became three-dimensional. All of the pieces produced during the completion of this creative project have been package-like and have seemed more like objects that illusion. Although

the first seven works completed for this investigation are basically two-dimensional, they have protruding, relief-like areas giving them three-dimensional qualities. Therefore, I feel that the shift to three-dimensional pieces was a very natural progression in this work.

Figure #6: "Serialized Conversion"
Size: 7-1/2" x 15-1/2"

As in the preceding piece, plastic and fabric materials were again combined to produce this work. Materials included pelon fabric, silver metallic sheeting, celophane-like tape, liquid plastic, and clear vinyl.

Hardened liquid plastic was scraped from the bottom of an empty can of liquid plastic, and these hardened shapes were arranged and connected with little dabs of clear silicone rubber sealant, making up the serial images in this work. These hardened liquid plastic shapes were tinted by dusting them with a little liquid graphite on a stiff-bristled brush. After this, the small plastic shapes were backed with silver mylar making the images seem very precious, almost jewel-like in appearance.

Four inch by three inch rectangular clear vinyl sheets were machine sewn with silver thread onto tinted pelon fabric producing a housing for each of the four formed liquid plastic serial images. The silver thread was difficult to work with as a joining device because it continuously

broke apart when used on the electric sewing machine to connect the plastic materials. However, the silver thread did create a nice visual effect.

The pelon fabric which was used as the background for the serial images was colored by rubbing soft pastel into the fabric and then sealing the color by brushing over it with clear liquid plastic. This method of coloring the pelon produced a more evenly opaque surface than the previously used method of tinting the liquid plastic and pouring or brushing it onto the fabric.

The cellophane-like tape used in this piece was not used to join materials, but to create a visual effect. A strip of cellophane tape was stuck across an area on top of the tinted pelon fabric surface to produce a shiny, slick look in the area being covered with this cellophane-like tape. This alteration of the pelon surface helped unify the pelon background with the plastic imagery placed on top of it.

Figure #7: "Pyrotechnic Aftermath"
Size: 14" x 11"

Again, only two of the three types of materials being investigated were combined to produce this work. The paper and plastic materials combined were liquid plastic, metallic window film, cellophane, handmade paper, and rice paper.

The somewhat square protruding image within this piece was produced by altering both the rice paper and the liquid plastic. Liquid plastic was poured into a square form made from folding rice paper into a box container. The liquid plastic was then allowed to harden, after which the sides of the paper container were cut away. The bottom of the container, now a combination of plastic and rice paper, was used as part of the relief imagery in this work.

I found that plastic mender, as well as producing a strong bond, also dries clear. Because of this transparent quality of the plastic mender when dry, it was useful for joining the cellophane partially covering this work to the surface in places. Being able to glue the cellophane covering to the surface in chosen areas helped me to control the reflective imagery created by the clear cellophane covering. The clear cellophane laid flat in places which produced areas that could be viewed easily. Wrinkled or protruding cellophane covered other parts of the surface of this piece creating areas which were now less transparent because of the reflections produced by the placement of the cellophane covering.

Although soft pastel as a medium for tinting materials has been discussed previously, a new method of applying the pastel was used here. Rice paper was first brushed with clear liquid plastic and allowed to dry. I was somewhat

infatuated with the visual effect produced by combining the liquid plastic and rice paper. The liquid plastic made the rice paper appear slightly glossy and fairly transparent. After this, soft pastel was rubbed onto the plastic covered rice paper; and then another coat of liquid plastic was brushed onto the surface to seal the pastel. The result was a tinted plastic covered rice paper surface which retained its transparency. Also, more control over the amount of color or gradual change of a color could be executed using this method to tint the paper and plastic material.

I decided to present this piece as I have presented several of the previous wall pieces in this investigation with just a foam-core board backing to hold it away from the wall. However, because of the size of this work (8" x 6"), it seemed to be overpowered by the wall. This problem was solved by presenting the piece inside a 14" x 11" plexiglass box. Hanging this work on the wall within a plexiglass box created a more intimate environment for this work, making the piece seem more significant.

Figure #8: "Coming Out"
Size: Three Sections, each 8" x 13" x 3"

This work was my first attempt to produce a totally three-dimensional piece using paper and plastic materials. The plastic materials included metallic window film, Enviro

Tex, a high gloss polymer coating; Varathane liquid plastic; clear vinyl; plastic fishing line; and acetate. Among the paper materials were pink waxed paper; Reeves BFK grey print paper; cotton linter, raw material for making handmade paper; and rice paper. The two types of materials used, paper and plastic, again worked well together.

Enviro Tex is a plastic material, much like liquid plastic, used for the first time in this piece. I altered and tinted Enviro Tex using the same methods as I had used with liquid plastic. The main difference between Enviro Tex and liquid plastic was that the Enviro Tex dries to a higher glossed polymer area which is harder than liquid plastic and less easily changed once it has dried.

Besides using most of the media that I have mentioned previously for tinting or coloring, in this piece spray enamel was also used. The spray enamel worked well for cutting down on the overall shininess of the surfaces in areas. Also, the spray could be controlled to produce a gradual color change so it was useful as an opaque color for the paper and plastic materials.

This piece had many lives, and the materials were altered many times. The idea of shifting to a three-dimensional form with this piece surfaced during the process of combining materials, laying one thing on top of another while working on the floor. All of the pieces produced for

this project up to this point had begun in this manner, but the previous pieces had at some stage moved to the wall. With this piece, I decided not to move the arrangement to the wall, but to continue construction viewing the piece as a three-dimensional form.

In order to form three-dimensional shapes, some new techniques were used to alter the plastic and paper materials. New techniques included forming by crushing, heating, tying, and soaking. I formed an arrangement of plastic materials and waxed paper into shell-like three-dimensional shapes by crushing and folding by hand and then running a needle with plastic fishing line in it through various places and tying the fishing line off to hold the forms in place. I made about six of these shell-like forms, and some of the arrangements were heated first with an electric iron and then formed and tied off with fishing line. Only three of the six forms were chosen to be developed in this piece. Rag paper and cotten linter were soaked in liquid plastic and then formed and folded together to become the base for the shell-like forms. In addition, small torn pieces of rice paper were soaked in liquid plastic before being draped from the shell-like forms to the plastic soaked paper base, creating the illusion that the shell-like forms were emerging from the base.

Presentation of this piece was somewhat of a problem. I specified this work as a table piece because I felt that it should be placed in a space for presentation where it could be viewed from each side as well as from above. I felt that the top surface of the table on which it is placed should be about three feet from the floor and should be large enough to allow several inches of space from the edge of the work to the edge of the table all the way around the piece. A twenty inch by twenty inch space would be ample, yet create a fairly intimate environment for the work. I felt that the sections should be overlapped or slightly stacked, repeating in presentation the layering and overlapping kinds of images that happen within each section. The main problem in presentation of this piece was finding ample space and the right type of space for placement of the work. Also, I felt that the presentation, as well as the imagery, might change and become new each time the work was moved to a new space and restacked.

Upon completing this piece and thinking back over the development of the last few pieces which were limited to two types of materials, I began to feel a definite preference in combining only two of the three types of materials being investigated, rather than combining all three. At this point, I did not find a preference to one or the other "two-material combinations"--paper and plastic or fabric and plastic. It just seemed that the ideas flowed a little

easier when working with only two of the three types of materials being investigated.

Figure #9: "Packaged Deliverance"
Size: 5" x 5" x 5"

Plastic and paper materials were combined to produce this three-dimensional table piece. Materials included a heavy canvas-like paper, liquid plastic, mystic tape, a clear plastic baggie, silicone rubber sealant, metallic window film, and one of the three-dimensional shell-like forms constructed during the development of Figure #8 but not used in the completion of that work.

The three-dimensional shell-like plastic form left over from Figure #8 was altered by dropping the plastic form into a clear plastic baggie, pouring liquid plastic over it, and hanging the baggie on my studio wall to dry for a few days. When the liquid plastic was dry, I partially ripped the plastic baggie from the shell-like form, leaving it partly encased in hardened liquid plastic as well as clear plastic sheeting.

I cut and folded the canvas-like paper into an open box form to be used as the container-base for the plastic encased shell-like form. The two forms were connected with silicone sealant which became an addition to the imagery as well as a joining device. Cellophane tape was twisted and wrapped around the paper constructed container-base, again

creating a visual effect as well as reinforcing the structure of the paper box form.

There were no new types of media used to color this work, but the method used to apply dry pigment was new here. Dry pigment was brushed onto some of the formed plastic sheeting and hardened silicone forms with a dry brush. When the hue and intensity that I wanted was achieved by repeating this dusting technique, liquid platic in an aerosol can was sprayed over the dry pigment to seal it.

I again specified this work as a table piece because I believed that it was important for it to be viewed from all sides and from above. The top surface of the table should again be about three feet from the floor and no larger than fifteen inches by fifteen inches if the piece is placed in a space alone. I felt that it could also be presented successfully in the same space with several other items such as small sculptural pieces or jewelry. The main problem that could arise in presentation of this piece would be for it to be placed on too large a surface and be overpowered by the space.

Figure #10: "Charm Canister"
Size: 3" x 3" x 3"

As in the preceding pieces, this work was also presented as a three-dimensional table piece and was produced by combining plastic and paper materials. Included were

rice paper, handmade paper, cellophane, liquid plastic, metallic window film, and several small tin pre-made amulets.

After being cut and folded into a box form, the rice paper was brushed with liquid plastic reinforcing the structure of the box and as discussed previously making the rice paper slightly transparent. Also, small torn pieces of rice paper were brushed with liquid plastic and layered to build up parts of the form of the container imagery.

Gluing with plastic mender and sewing by hand with silver metallic thread were joining devices used in this piece. Plastic mender was used to glue some of the plastic film and cellophane to paper and plastic. The plastic mender produced a very strong and permanent bond for joining paper to plastic or plastic to plastic. Silver metallic thread was used again here, only this time the silver thread was used to connect the paper and plastic materials by means of hand sewing which was more successful than trying to use the metallic thread on a sewing machine as was the method used previously in developing Figure #6.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

During the execution of this investigation, data for this creative project was collected in three ways. A journal was kept which was invaluable in making me more conscious of the way in which I worked and of the processes utilized in developing my imagery. Documentation in the journal was mostly stream of consciousness writing, addressing myself to the questions asked in the original proposal. Also, samples of various materials and media for coloring were kept in the journal which aided in recalling which effects were produced by which methods. Data was also collected by means of photographic slides at the completion of each work. The slides of each finished piece were valuable as illustrations for the descriptive analysis. Figure #8 was chosen to be photographed at various stages of development as well as at completion. However, I feel that the slides taken during the construction of Figure #8 were of no great value to the content of this investigation. The idea sounded good in the proposal, but really did not work out in execution. Because each work developed in a different way, the data collected by photographing various stages of one piece was invalid. In addition, having to stop

and photograph a piece at various stages seemed to break the flow of the work for me, so collecting data in this manner was unfortunately more of a hindrance than a help.

Many techniques were used to alter the opaque and transparent materials during this project. Forming, folding, wrinkling, cutting, ripping or tearing, and wrapping were all techniques used to alter nylon, pelon, and canvas fabric; plastic sheeting and film; and rice, wax, and print papers. Rice paper and nylon fabric were gathered, and an arrangement of plastic sheeting and wax paper was crushed. Liquid plastic or Enviro Tex was poured, brushed, and dripped onto, under, or around most of the other materials used at some time during the development of the research. This technique of ironing with an electric iron was used to melt and fray clear vinyl and metallic window film. In addition, it was used to wrinkle and fog clear cellophane and to form plastic sheeting. Rag papers, cotton linter, and pelon fabric were soaked in liquid plastic before being formed, thereby causing them to permanently retain the form when dry. Cellophane tape was twisted and wrapped around paper forms as well as stuck over the surface of pelon fabric to alter the surfaces of those materials.

Mechanical devices, chemical devices, and physical properties were utilized to join the transparent and opaque materials. The mechanical devices used to join were machine

sewing, electric ironing, and two additional manual processes--hand sewing and tying. Sewing has been a process used in my work to join materials in the past and is often the first method that comes to mind when constructing a piece. Using the sewing machine and sewing by hand both produce a very strong bond and become important visual elements in the work. The electric iron was used to laminate materials between sheets of clear plastic. The heat melted the plastic sheeting which joined the materials. Running plastic fishing line through a piece, then pulling it tight, and tying it was a method used to hold some of the three-dimensional forms. Chemical devices used to join materials were plastic cement, clear silicone rubber sealant, and plastic mender. The cement was used to join plastic materials temporarily, but did not produce a strong enough bond for permanence. Both plastic mender and silicone sealant produced strong bonds for joining plastic to plastic, and the plastic mender was successful for joining plastic to paper or to fabric as well. The physical properties of liquid plastic and Enviro Tex, metallic window film, clear plastic and cellophane tapes were utilized to join materials. Liquid plastic and Enviro Tex were poured under and over materials and allowed to dry, thereby joining the materials as they hardened. Liquid plastic was also brushed onto materials before they were placed together so that it acted as a glue. Materials adhered to the sticky side of metallic

window film and the sticky surface of clear plastic tape and cellophane tape was used to joing materials by taping. These same two materials, clear plastic tape and cellophane tape, visually worked in well with the materials being joined.

Most of the media used to facilitate coloring or tinting during this project were first used to color liquid plastic, and then the colored liquid plastic was applied to the other materials. Dry pigment, oil paint, bronze powder, liquid graphite, oil pastels, and soft pastels were all media stirred into liquid plastic to tint or color it. All of these media were successful for coloring the liquid plastic. The mixing of oil pastels with liquid plastic was the only medium tried that did not produce a very smooth blend and was a slower process. Dry pigment, bronze powder, liquid graphite, and crushed soft pastels--all powdered pigments--were very successful for either tinting or coloring liquid plastic and in producing a very smooth blend. Oil paint was also successful in coloring the liquid plastic, but only for producing a very opaque color. Fabric dye and oil based printing ink were both media used to color paper and fabric. Fabric dye was sponged onto rag paper and pelon fabric was tinted by sponging in fabric dye. Paper and fabric left over from some old collagraph prints were used in two pieces. Consequently, these materials had been

colored by oil based printing ink. Dry pigment, liquid graphite, and bronze powder in their dry form were brushed or dusted onto plastic materials and then sealed by being sprayed with liquid plastic in an aerosol can. Soft pastels were used in their solid form to be rubbed onto fabric and paper for coloring. Spray enamel was also a useful coloring media for plastic sheeting and paper. The spray enamel produced an opaque color and could be used to create a gradual color change on the surface of the materials.

During the development of this project, exploring the visual potentials of combining plastic with fabric or paper, or both, I began to feel a definite preference for combining only two of the three types of materials being investigated, rather than all three. I combined all three materials in the pieces produced for Figure #1 and #2, and I feel that both of those pieces are successful. However, it seemed to me during the process of combining materials that the ideas flowed a little easier when working with only two materials. Although I do not feel any particular difficulties in combining either of those "two-material combination," I actually seemed to favor combining paper and plastic since Figures #3, #6, #8, #9, and #10 are all paper/plastic combinations and only Figures #4, #5, and #7 are fabric/plastic combinations. I feel that the tendency to combine paper instead of fabric with plastic was due to a personal infatuation with paper

rather than any kind of structural problems in combining fabric and plastic.

The shift from two-dimensional wall pieces to three-dimensional table pieces during the development of this project may seem like a major change in the work. However, because of the object-like presence and packaged appearance of all the works, I feel like the shift to three-dimensional pieces was very natural and an important development in the investigation. The last two pieces completed for this project which are small three-dimensional container-like works allowed me to express some ideas that are very delicate and personal to me. I continued to answer the questions that I asked of myself in this investigation during the construction of the three-dimensional pieces. However, I did begin to find new questions emerging, so I believe I will continue to work with some small three-dimensional pieces in the future.

There were several different problems encountered in presentation of the various transparent and opaque pieces produced for this investigation. The main problem encountered in Figure #1 was presentation. Since the work exists in five rectangular sections, there was a need for some system that would connect the five sections together. The solution was sandwiching the sections between two pieces of plexiglass, creating a very minimal presentation device that did not draw

the eye away from the elements within each section and their relationship to each other. Figures #2, #3, #4, #5, and #6 were all hung on the wall for presentation with only one addition. A piece of foam-core board was sewn to the back of the works to strengthen them and hold them slightly away from the wall. A device was made for attaching the pieces to the wall by sewing a one inch by three inch strip of velcro attachment to the core board backing and tacking the joining strip to the wall. I had intended to present Figure #7 in the same way, but because of its size, 8" x 6," it seemed to be overpowered by the wall. This problem was solved by presenting Figure #7 inside a 14" x 11" plexiglass box. The plexiglass box created a more intimate environment for the work to exist in, making the piece seem more significant.

All three of the three-dimensional pieces, Figures #8, #9, and #10, were presented as table pieces because I felt that it was important for them to be placed in a space for presentation where they could be viewed from each side as well as from above. The top surface of the table on which they are presented should be about three feet from the floor. The top surface of the table on which Figure #8 is presented should be at least twenty inches by thirty inches, leaving ample space around the work. The top surface to the table on which Figures #9 and #10 are placed should be about

fifteen inches by fifteen inches, creating a fairly intimate environment so the space does not engulf the small works.

Lighting was a problem I considered in the presentation of all of the pieces because of the reflective quality of the plastic materials. However, I do not view this as any more of a problem than hanging any piece covered with glass or plexiglass. In fact, the problem of reflections is probably less important with the presentation of these works because some of the shininess and distractions created by the reflective materials were intended as integral to the image.

I believe, generally, the investigation was successful and that I answered the questions that I had formulated for myself at the beginning of the investigation. However, because of the nature of the questions, I feel that there are many more answers to be found through further work in this area of concentration. There are so many different plastic, paper, and fabric materials available that only a few selected ones could be dealt with during the project; and many combinations of materials still remain to be explored with future work.